

## **Worcestershire Deep Dive Summary June 2025**

### **Key Areas Progressed**

#### **1. EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) Timeliness & Quality**

- Completion within 20 weeks improved from 29% to 69%.
- Quality assurance audits show a rise in EHCPs rated “Good” (from 20% to 65%).
- Increased capacity and staffing changes have contributed to improved timeliness.

#### **2. Annual Reviews**

- Compliance rate improved to 80%.
- Better data tracking and a new portal system are being introduced.
- Caseworker relationships with schools have improved, and capacity has increased.

#### **3. Multi-Agency Collaboration**

- Introduction of ISCO roles has improved social care input.
- Health Quality Assurance shows 70% compliance, though missing advice remains a key issue.
- Educational Psychology (EP) service has received additional funding; social care is developing new templates and training.
- Heard how effective the DCO (Designated Clinical Officer) and new DSCO (Designated Social Care Officer) roles were proving to be.
- DSCO role impact established and clear action plan.

#### **4. Voice of the Child**

- Schools are using more creative tools (e.g., pictures, PowerPoints) to capture child voice.
- Quality Assurance audits now include child voice as a key focus area.
- Co-production leads have been introduced, though awareness and integration need strengthening.

#### **5. Parent & Carer Engagement**

- Increased compliments, especially regarding individual caseworker support.
- Communication remains a top complaint, but efforts are underway to improve clarity and escalation routes.

## **6. Quality Assurance**

- Quality Assurance mechanisms are evolving, with Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) challenging each other and feeding into board-level Quality Assurance.
- Regular audits and feedback loops are being embedded, though some areas still lack full integration.
- Restructure of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team with redefined roles has supported further efficiencies.

## **Key Recommendations**

### **1. EHCP & Annual Review Improvements**

- Develop a multi-agency escalation protocol for missing/delayed advice.
- Implement a shared digital dashboard for real-time tracking of EHCP and Annual Review performance.
- Strengthen training on Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) outcomes, co-production, and statutory duties.
- Establish an Annual Review Strategy utilising the new information management system due to go live in September. This would improve communication, set expectations, and enable better preparation for and contribution to Annual Reviews.

### **2. Voice of the Child**

- Introduce a child-friendly EHCP summary.
- Expand use of creative tools to capture child voice, especially for those with complex needs.
- Ensure co-production officers are fully briefed and engaged in Quality Assurance processes.

### **3. Multi-Agency Working**

- Address health advice delays by tackling waiting lists and improving internal communication.
- Evaluate ISCO impact and expand where effective.
- Refresh and implement the Worcestershire SEND Quality Assurance Framework to reflect recent learning, reduce silo working, and ensure a balanced approach. This should include embedding robust, in-depth MDT

practices while also promoting system wide engagement and consistency across all partners.

- Ensuring that the understanding of what good looks like extends into other teams e.g. Safeguarding and Early Health teams.

#### **4. Parent & Carer Engagement**

- Regularly publish “You Said, We Did” updates.
- Strengthen the feedback loop by linking parent/carers/Children and Young People (CYP) feedback to individual EHCPs and Annual Reviews at key points in the process—not just post-finalisation—to support targeted learning and continuous improvement through the audit cycle.
- Improve clarity on who parents can contact and how to escalate concerns.

#### **5. Workforce Development**

- Continue evaluating the EHCP Quality Assurance training programme.
- Enhance collaboration between Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCOs), social workers, and EPs.
- Embed audit findings into supervision and team development.
- Build on the learning from the 11-week induction of new case workers. Building confidence and capability. Weekly case management, constant discussion, and review. Empowering and enabling improved front line practice and better relationships with families.
- A positive strategy is to align performance management review goals with the strategic priorities. This is already embedded in Children’s Social Care (CSC).

#### **6. Impact Measurement**

- Develop clearer metrics to assess the impact of EHCPs on education, health, and life outcomes.
- The restructure of the SEND team presents a valuable opportunity to embed best practice through an allocated team model, ensuring that transitions—particularly from Year 9 onwards and into post-16 pathways. Ensure transitions are well planned and supported.
- It is encouraging that all caseworkers are prioritising visits to educational settings, with the dual aim of strengthening relationships and enhancing the quality of Annual Reviews. This proactive engagement should be supported by evidence of improved review quality, alongside measurable

progress in meeting the 4-week amendment notice period. Collect evidence of improving quality alongside the % improvement of meeting the 4-week amendment notice period.